IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly rewrite Claims 1-11 and add claims 12-19 as follows, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121:

1. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ An isolated coryneform bacterium having L-glutamine-producing ability, wherein said bacterium has been ~~and~~ modified by disrupting or mutating a glutaminase gene on the chromosome so that the glutaminase activity of the bacterium is reduced to 0.1 U/mg of cellular protein or less, wherein said glutaminase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

a) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, and

b) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C.

2-3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently amended) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase activity is ~~similar to~~1/2 or less than glutamine synthetase activity when measured as activity per unit weight of cellular proteins.

5. (Currently amended) The bacterium of claim 1, which is further modified by increasing the expression of a glutamine synthetase gene so that said glutamine synthetase activity of the bacterium is enhanced, wherein said glutamine synthetase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

c) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3, and

d) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C, and which encodes a protein which has glutamine synthetase activity.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently amended) The bacterium according to claim ~~6~~5, wherein said ~~increase in the~~ expression of ~~a~~ the glutamine synthetase gene is ~~attained~~ increased by increasing the copy number of said gene ~~encoding glutamine synthetase~~, or modifying an expression regulatory sequence of said gene, ~~encoding glutamine synthetase~~ so that expression of the gene in the bacterium is enhanced.

8. (Withdrawn) A method for producing L-glutamine, comprising

a) culturing the bacterium of claim 1 in a medium to produce and accumulate L-glutamine in the medium, and

b) collecting the L-glutamine from the medium.

9. (Withdrawn) A glutamine synthetase gene derived from a coryneform bacterium, wherein the sequence from -35 of the gene is replaced with TTGCCA, and the sequence from -10 of the gene is replaced with TATAAT.

10. (Withdrawn) The glutamine synthetase gene of claim 9, wherein said gene has the DNA sequence of SEQ ID No. 3.

11. (Withdrawn) The glutamine synthetase gene of claim 9, wherein gene encodes a protein having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No. 4.

12. (New) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein said glutaminase gene encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

13. (New) The bacterium of claim 7, wherein said modifying an expression regulatory sequence comprises replacing the native promoter with lac promoter, trp promoter, or trc promoter.

14. (New) The bacterium of claim 1, wherein the glutaminase activity of the bacterium is reduced to 0.01 U/mg of cellular protein or less.

15. (New) The bacterium of claim 14, wherein said glutaminase activity is 1/2 or less than glutamine synthetase activity when measured as activity per unit weight of cellular proteins.

16. (New) The bacterium of claim 14, which is further modified by increasing the expression of a glutamine synthetase gene so that said glutamine synthetase activity of the bacterium is enhanced, wherein said glutamine synthetase gene is selected from the group consisting of:

c) a DNA comprising the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3, and

d) a DNA which is able to hybridize with the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3 under stringent conditions of 1 X SSC, 0.1% SDS, at 60°C, and which encodes a protein which has glutamine synthetase activity.

17. (New) The bacterium according to claim 16, wherein said expression of the glutamine synthetase gene is increased by increasing the copy number of said gene, or modifying an expression regulatory sequence of said gene, so that expression of the gene in the bacterium is enhanced.

18. (New) The bacterium of claim 14, wherein said glutaminase gene encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

19. (New) The bacterium of claim 17, wherein said modifying an expression regulatory sequence comprises replacing the native promoter with lac promoter, trp promoter, or trc promoter.